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Kasten to fight proposed CIA charter

By Donald Pfarrer
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Sen.-Elect Robert W. Kasten Jr. (R-Wis.) said Wednesday that he would oppose the charter being drafted to govern the CIA because it scatters supervision of the agency too widely among congressional committees.

Kasten, who served on the House committee that investigated the CIA in the mid-1970s, said he would favor a single joint committee modeled on the Atomic Energy Committee to oversee the work of the intelligence agency. The committee, he said, should be made up of House and Senate leaders.

Kasten said the election had delivered a clear message that the country wanted "the strongest possible CIA," as part of a stronger national defense; and he said there was no conflict between this goal and the preservation of civil liberties.

At a press conference in his Fox Point campaign headquarters, Kasten praised his vanquished adversary, Sen. Gaylord Nelson (D-Wis.), as "a true giant in the state of Wisconsin." He said Nelson's integrity and skill were a credit to the state.

Kasten defeated Nelson in Tuesday's election 1,101,669 to 1,061,899.

He said the key to his upset victory was his ability to cut into the traditional Democratic vote, particularly in the 4th Congressional District. He said he had needed 42% or 43% of the Milwaukee County vote and got about 45%.

"I don't feel the election was a defeat, in a way, for Gaylord Nelson," he said. "It was a victory for Bob Kasten. . . . The people voted for a change."

He said abortion and other "traditional family value issues were nowhere near as important" as economic issues in the campaign. What the election showed, in Wisconsin and the nation, he continued, was the strong desire for less government

intervention and less government spending.

"I believe we are part of a victory for new leadership, new direction, for a less restrictive government and for an effort to restore the rewards for work," he said.

He called his victory "a wonderful surprise" and said the newspaper polls that had showed him as much as 20 percentage points behind Nelson probably reflected the low point of his campaign.

A lot of people, he said, decided to vote for him in the last two days of the campaign. He added that about two days before the polls opened he himself had come to believe he'd win.

Kasten said he hoped to serve on committees dealing with finance, taxation and budget; his second choice would be intelligence and foreign affairs.

He said he would introduce legislation to limit senators and congressmen to 12 years' service — a policy he has advocated in past campaigns — but would not impose a 12-year limit on his own service unless the Congress adopted his bill.